

261—106.4 (15) Program description, application procedures, and delegation of functions.

106.4(1) *General description.* The program provides technical assistance and financial assistance to businesses seeking SBIR/STTR funding. All awards of financial assistance must ultimately be approved by the board, after a recommendation by the committee, and a contract must be entered into with the authority before moneys will be disbursed.

106.4(2) *Program components and activities.* The program has two primary components, a technical assistance component and a financial assistance component, both of which are intended to win more phase I and phase II SBIR/STTR awards and fast track grants for Iowa businesses. The corporation shall be the primary provider of technical assistance to businesses and shall also work with the authority to provide financial assistance.

a. In providing technical assistance, the corporation shall develop a pre-proposal submission component that facilitates expert peer reviews from commercial reviewers with in-depth market knowledge. The resulting reviews should provide the business with a set of recommendations and tips for troubleshooting SBIR/STTR proposals. The corporation shall ensure that such businesses develop and implement recommendations for their proposals based on industry best practices.

b. The corporation shall also develop a service component that includes an online platform to provide information to regional SBIR/STTR applicants, researchers, and entrepreneurs. In connection with this platform, the corporation shall identify, promote, and assist all highly qualified commercially relevant companies that are discovered through the platform and shall connect them to other investment programs and investors in the region.

c. In providing the technical assistance described in this subrule, the corporation shall work in conjunction with the program administrator of the office of intellectual property and technology transfer at Iowa State University. The following services shall be provided as a result of this collaboration:

(1) Detailed outlines and other tools to make the drafting of a proposal and other accompanying documentation less daunting.

(2) Reviews and critiques of iterative drafts to improve the structure and narrative of both the research and the commercialization plans.

(3) Evaluation of budgets and budget justifications to produce stronger applications and avoid “leaving money on the table.”

(4) Assistance with the electronic registrations and the application submission process.

d. In working with the authority to provide financial assistance, the corporation shall perform the functions delegated pursuant to subrule 106.4(4).

106.4(3) *Application and award procedures.* Eligible businesses may submit applications to the authority for financial assistance. To be eligible, a business must meet the requirements in rule 261—106.6(15). The applications will receive an initial review to confirm program eligibility before being sent to the committee for a recommendation on funding. The committee will provide its recommendation to the board for a final determination on the provision of financial assistance. The board may approve, deny, or defer each application for financial assistance under the program. The board will consider applications for financial assistance on a first-come, first-served basis. If the board approves funding for a business, the authority will prepare a required contract specifying the terms and conditions under which the financial assistance is to be provided to the business.

106.4(4) *Delegation of certain administrative functions to the corporation.* The authority will delegate certain administrative functions of the program to the corporation. The functions that will be delegated are:

a. The initial application review process, including an analysis of whether the business meets all requirements of eligibility under the program and a recommendation on the amount of financial assistance to be provided and under what terms and conditions.

b. The tracking and monitoring of the business’s SBIR/STTR application progress as well as the eventual outcome. The corporation shall report annually to the authority on the results of the program.

c. The tracking and monitoring of contract terms and conditions for applicants receiving financial assistance under the program.

d. The provision of technical assistance as described in subrule 106.4(2).

106.4(5) *Administrative functions not delegated.* The authority will retain, and not delegate, the performance of the following functions: (1) the final determination as to whether to approve, deny, or defer an award of financial assistance; (2) the disbursement of moneys provided for in an award of financial assistance; (3) the final determination as to whether there is a default in the terms of a contract entered into under the program, including all decisions regarding appropriate remedies for such a default; and (4) any other function not clearly delegated to the corporation pursuant to subrule 106.4(4).

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